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Search Dance/USA

- [About](#)
 - [Mission & Vision](#)
 - [Core Values of Equity and Inclusion](#)
 - [Board of Trustees](#)
 - [Dance/USA Team Members](#)
 - [Dance/USA News and Press](#)
 - [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Membership](#)
 - [Become A Member Today](#)
 - [Categories and Benefits](#)
 - [Council & Affinity Group Descriptions](#)
 - [Dance/USA's Google Groups](#)
 - [Dance/USA Member Portal](#)
 - [Search Member Directory](#)
 - [Quick Links](#)
 - [Spotlight on Members](#)
 - [Jobs, Auditions, & Internships](#)
- [Leadership & Learning](#)
 - [Upcoming Events](#)
 - [Annual Conference](#)
 - [Dance Forum](#)
 - [Institute for Leadership Training](#)
 - [Engaging Dance Audiences](#)
 - [Dance Business Bootcamp](#)
 - [Dance/USA Awards](#)
 - [Past Events](#)
 - [Other Professional Development Opportunities](#)
- [Research & Information](#)
 - [Directory of Not-for-Profit Dance Ensembles](#)
 - [Snapshot of the Field](#)
 - [Member Surveys](#)
 - [Services and Information Requests](#)
 - [Research Resources](#)
 - [Task Force on Dancer Health](#)
 - [Staff Residency Program](#)
 - [Resources on Harassment in the Workplace](#)
- [Advocacy & Visibility](#)
 - [Key Advocacy Issues](#)
 - [Policy and Legislative Updates](#)
 - [Advocacy Resources](#)
 - [Request a Peer Consultation Letter](#)
 - [Scheduling Congressional Visits](#)
 - [Arts National Policy Statement](#)
 - [DOL Proposed Overtime Reform](#)
- [Archiving & Preservation](#)
 - [Our History](#)
 - [Dance Heritage Coalition Integration](#)
 - [Artist's Legacy Toolkit](#)
- [Support](#)
 - [Make a Donation](#)
 - [Individual Giving](#)
 - [National Leadership Council for Dance](#)
 - [Institutional Donors](#)
 - [Corporate Sponsors](#)

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Building Audiences for Dance

April 17, 2018

How Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Pacific Northwest Ballet Are Attracting Millennial Audiences

<https://www.danceusa.org/ejournal/2018/04/17/building-audiences-dance>



Alvin American Dance Theater and Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) have, with support from The Wallace Foundation, spent the past two seasons conducting market research and testing initiatives designed to attract new millennial audiences. The Ailey company has been testing performance-related social events and investigating different ticket prices with millennials. PNB tested out a special mailing list, events targeting millennials, and used market research to inform the presentation of new dance works in locations new to PNB performances.

What did they learn? What surprises did they uncover? Here are some takeaways from a recent webinar featuring these two organizations:

- What people say and what they buy are two different things.
- Younger audiences don't behave that differently from other audiences.
- Drink specials are important.
- Audiences want to feel that they're getting a good value.
- Many millennial audiences are interested in traditional programming.

Watch the webinar!

Hear Thomas Cott, senior director of marketing and creative content at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Lia Chiarelli, director of marketing and communications at Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) share what they learned about their target audiences and expand on the lessons they learned over the course of their audience building projects. Both Cott and Chiarelli include practical takeaways for organizations of all sizes.

Building Audiences for Dance



Interested in more resources on building audiences?

[Find more resources on The Wallace Foundation website here.](#)

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We accept submissions on topics relevant to the field: advocacy, artistic issues, arts policy, community building, development, employment, engagement, touring, and other topics that deal with the business of dance. We cannot publish criticism, single-company season announcements, and single-company or single artist profiles. If you have a topic that you would like to see addressed, please contact journal@danceusa.org.

The opinions and views expressed in this article are the author's and do not reflect the opinions and views of Dance/USA.

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